

HURRICANE MITCH RECONSTRUCTION UPDATE



USAID/Nicaragua Hurricane Mitch Reconstruction Program

(U.S. Millions of Dollars)	\$103.6
Public Health	30.6
Economic Reactivation	53.5
Disaster Mitigation	6.6
Education	4.5
Municipal Infrastructure	2.9
Transparency and Accountability	1.0
Food Aid	4.5



Departments of Nicaragua
Affected by Hurricane Mitch

FARMERS INCREASE INCOME THROUGH USAID/ADRA AGRICULTURAL PROJECT

Las Segovias, Nicaragua—Hurricane Mitch reconstruction efforts in this northern mountainous region, stretching across four departments of the country, is turning into a double benefit for many farmers.

One of USAID's main partners in Las Segovias, the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) is implementing a \$945,000 agricultural program that tailors activities to the soil and climate conditions of each community. As a result, many farmers participating in the project have recovered their losses and will be able to continue profiting even after the program ends.

In the community of Apalí, where rainfall is normally sufficient for basic grain crops, the USAID-funded project promotes improved corn and bean seeds to increase yields.

Aura Lidia Marin, with



The project promotes hybrid corn varieties to increase yields. Farmer Ronald Moreno set up an experimental field of six varieties of corn to determine the best variety for the area's soil and climate.

financing through the USAID/ADRA project, planted certified bean seed this season instead of the regular bean seed she planted in the past. The results of the first harvest were truly astounding. Marin's two acre plot yielded 22 hundredweights of beans. Before, the most she could expect from two acres was five hundredweights. In addition, Marin received a silo from the project that allows her to store grains for her family's consumption and for selling when prices are higher.

"This is such a tremendous gain for us," said Marin. "We lost so much during Hurricane Mitch but through this project we are coming out ahead."

Marin's neighbor, Ronald Moreno, is participating in an experiment, through the project, testing corn varieties. Moreno planted six different varieties of corn seed on a one acre plot



Aura Lidia Marin increased her bean yields from 5 hundredweights to 22 hundredweights on her two-acre plot through financing and technical assistance from the USAID/ADRA project.

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FARMERS INCREASE INCOME...

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to compare yields. The results of the experiment will be shared with other producers in the area so that in the future farmers can select the highest yielding seed variety best suited for their soil and climatic conditions. Moreno said it is too soon to pick a favorite, but five of the hybrid varieties are already producing more ears than corn seed traditionally used by farmers in the area.

However, some areas of Las Segovias are too dry for producing good basic grain crops—a situation that became more acute this year when Nicaragua experienced a drought. For semi-arid communities, the USAID/ADRA project promotes crop diversification by financing vegetable horticulture.

In the community of El Ensueno, Marvin Ruiz switched from planting beans and corn to tomatoes with financing and technical assistance from the USAID/ADRA project. Ruiz explained that sometimes he had good bean and corn crops but it was risky. With Hurricane Mitch the family lost all of their crops followed by two years of drought that cut yields.

“There is a drought again this year but this time we’re going to come out very well—now we plant tomatoes,” said Ruiz.

The USAID/ADRA agricultural project includes the upgrading and repair of 184 km of roads and bridge repair in Las Segovias that will increase market opportunities for farmers. More than 150 km of road improvement has been completed; including a 32 km stretch that will benefit over 200 producers in the region. A wooden bridge that was completely destroyed by Hurricane Mitch was rehabilitated, restoring market



After losing several crops of beans and corn, Marvin Ruiz now plants tomatoes with help from the USAID/ADRA project.

access for several communities. The road work is done by local residents, (37 percent women), who receive food rations and a small cash allotment. The “Food for Work” program is providing temporary employment and relief for families affected by Hurricane Mitch and now by a drought. An integral part of all USAID/ADRA agricultural activities is the training of producers in environmentally sustainable

farming methods. The project supports soil conservation and reforestation by promoting plant nurseries, tree planting for “living fences”, and contour planting on slopes. The equivalent of 43 km of living fences were built by project participants and there are currently 114 nurseries established with more than 260,000 plants for reforestation.

The 32-member Pine Flower Cooperative, which manages a section of pine forest in the community of Dipilto Viejo, set up a plant nursery through the project with 14,000 pine seedlings. The area is suffering an infestation of pine bark beetle that has destroyed many of the pines. With the help of the USAID/ADRA project, the Pine Flower Cooperative is replacing felled trees and learning forest management to protect the pines in the future.



The USAID/ADRA agricultural project set up 114 plant nurseries for reforestation. The Pine Flower Cooperative has 14,000 pine seedlings to replace trees lost from a pine beetle epidemic.

USAID/ADRA Agriculture, Infrastructure and Environment Project Profile (as of July 2001)

Project Grant \$945,000

Beneficiaries 20, 525

**Participants in
Food for Work
and
Cash for
Work projects** 12,267

**Kilometers of
rehabilitated
roads** 150 km

**Number of
households
adopting
environmentally
sustainable
farming
methods** 4,467

**Average percent
of income increase
for farmers
adopting project
agricultural
methods** 22%



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